

world are coming home this weekend to celebrate the new House and to visit old friends, doctors, nurses, and all those who have become a part of their family over the years.

The idea for the Ronald McDonald House was launched in 1978 by a group of parents and friends, most of whom had experienced the trauma of serious childhood illness in their own families. They were supported by contributions from the Houston McDonald's Operators Association, the Houston Oilers, and area foundations, corporations, community organizations, and individuals. In May 1981, the first family moved into the original Ronald McDonald House.

Because of its many outstanding medical facilities, thousands of children travel to Houston each year to be treated for serious illnesses. The Ronald McDonald House provides a place where the whole family can stay in a homelike environment and find support as they share with other families who are also experiencing the trauma of childhood illness. The Ronald McDonald House strives to relieve the stress and pain of illness by offering these families a warm, caring environment where they can share their concerns.

In the fall of 1994, a \$10 million capital campaign was launched to secure funds for the construction of a new, larger Ronald McDonald House of Houston in the Texas Medical Center. With the successful completion of this campaign in September 1997, the doors to the current House were opened.

The new House is a three-story brick atrium building including 50 private bedrooms, an eight-station kitchen, special needs kitchen, dining room, meeting areas, business offices, resident manager quarters, playrooms, laundry, outside play area, and even a schoolroom. The House now averages 32 families a night and is well on its way to a full House of 50 families.

The reunion weekend will consist of an old fashioned Texas Round-up Barbecue hosted by the employees of Southwest Airlines, as well as a breakfast with special guests from the Texas Medical Center, The Spring Fling Children's Party, and a commemorative Closing Ceremony. During the ceremony, the children will plant a garden honoring those children who were unable to attend the reunion.

Mr. Speaker, the Ronald McDonald House of Houston, its staff, volunteers and especially its families over the years are a great inspiration to all Americans and I congratulate them on this special occasion.

SENSE OF CONGRESS ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING OF MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. JAY W. JOHNSON

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 1998

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Israel's 50th birthday and celebrate a half century of freedom, democracy, and independence.

In 1948, a Jewish homeland was created after 2,000 years in which its people knew only exile and, far too often, persecution. For thousands of years, the Jewish people would say, "Next year in Jerusalem," but their cry

would go unrealized. But the suffering and wandering ended fifty years ago when the world community fulfilled the dreams of the Zionists, and gave men and women around the globe a place in the holy land to call their own.

It has been a remarkable fifty years. As the Psalmist tells us, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." We have certainly seen this message bear truth. Israel's entire history has been a race of hope versus conflict. Though its people have known tragedy and war, Israel has always triumphed. This tiny nation has persevered and thrived, building an island of democracy in a troubled region and a haven of faith in an uncertain time.

As a representative of all the people of Northeast Wisconsin, it is my great pleasure to congratulate Israel on an extraordinary half century and extend my hope and confidence for its continued strength in the years to come.

In the last fifty years, we have turned the plea of "Next year in Jerusalem" into a promise. Long may that promise flourish.

SALUTING THE STATE OF ISRAEL ON THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 1998

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the State of Israel on the 50th Anniversary of its establishment. It is an honor to salute Israel, our long-standing ally and to remember that the United States of America was the first nation to recognize officially the State of Israel fifty years ago.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend several events in the 11th Congressional District of great significance. One event to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Israel was a joint celebration held by three synagogues in Morristown, New Jersey. The Congregation Ahavath Israel, the Morristown Jewish Center and Temple B'nai Or held a remarkable celebration on the grounds of the Vail Mansion which was both cultural and educational, and it highlighted the "modern miracle that is Israel."

What was of special significance were the number of children present from Conservative, Orthodox and Reform congregations. It was a remarkable event that reinforced the need to remember and to never forget the Holocaust and that the struggle for true peace is never over.

Another special event was the dedication of the Holocaust Memorial Garden and Study Center at Temple Beth Shalom in Livingston.

Mr. Speaker, the garden is a remarkable place. For some it will be a place for recollection, for others medication. Most importantly, the study center and garden is a place to teach the young. Like the Holocaust Museum in Washington, my hope is that this special Memorial Garden and Study Center will attract people of all faiths.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, April 21, the House of Representatives passed a resolution expressing the sense of Congress on the 50th Anniversary of the State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of friendship between our two nations. I was pleased to both cosponsor and vote for this resolution, which recognized the accomplishments of the Jewish people who

helped forge the modern state of Israel, and who make it the vibrant and dynamic country it is today. Mr. Speaker, I am including a copy of that important legislation at the end of my remarks today.

The modern state of Israel is still tied to the ancient Kingdom of Israel, first established over three thousand years ago. The recognition of their history, and respect of tradition, has helped guide Israel's leaders for the past fifty years. David Ben-Gurion, the founding father and first prime minister of Israel, said in an broadcast to the Israelis on May 15, 1948, the day after Independence:

Whatever we have achieved is the result of the efforts of earlier generations no less than our own. It is also the result of unwavering fidelity to our precious heritage, the heritage of a small nation that has suffered much, but at the same time has won for itself a special place in the history of mankind because of its spirit, faith and vision.

Mr. Speaker, my hope for the future of Israel, for the next fifty years and beyond, was best stated by Chaim Herzog, the fifth president of Israel, in his farewell address to the Knesset. To paraphrase him, I hope that Israel, as a flourishing, cohesive and progressive society, can continue to climb to the summits and reach the height from which they may be a beacon to the nations.

Joint Resolution expressing the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine, and through that vote, to create the State of Israel;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is the outgrowth of the existence of the historic Kingdom of Israel established three thousand years ago in the city of Jerusalem and in the land of Israel;

Whereas one century ago at the First Zionist Congress on August 29 to 31, 1897, in Basel, Switzerland, participants under the leadership of Theodore Herzl affirmed the desire to reestablish a Jewish homeland in the historic land of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jews followed the slaughter of more than six million European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment 50 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic society, and created a unique and vital economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy cost of six wars, terrorism, international ostracism, and economic boycotts;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant and functioning pluralistic democratic political system including freedom of speech, a free press, free and fair and open elections, the rule of law, and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas, at great social and financial costs, Israel has absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jews from countries throughout the World, many of them refugees from Arab countries, and fully integrated them into Israeli society;

Whereas for half a century the United States and Israel have maintained a special